

The 7 commandments of e-marketing data collection

“Data collection should not be limited to the sole visitors of the site. It is important to ascertain the relationship between the Internet user and the e-retailer in advance of the visit in order to correctly identify the consumer's marketing history.”

E-marketing campaign analyses performed by e-commerce sites are based on the ever more massive data volumes becoming more and more strategic. Marketing budgets are increasing, turnover has risen significantly and competition has intensified. Assessing the profitability of marketing operations has become a strategic opportunity, as has automating their optimization. A flexible use of reliable data, available quickly, compatible with current legislation and respecting the consumer, is a prerequisite for any winning e-marketing strategy. However, data collection is too often under-estimated by e-retailers; how is it possible to obtain reliable analyses without reliable data?

► Rule no. 1: Ensure the technical reliability and security of the data

Choose a partner who has an end-to-end controlled network infrastructure under their care, in order to secure storage and data processing:

- Redundant server centers in different datacenters
- Storage capacity in line with big data volumes
- 24-hour monitoring with the possibility of intervention on the site
- Storage and processing strategy, and securing of data history
- Secure management of data
- Confidentiality

► Rule no. 2: Exclude the third-party cookies

The cookie, the little text file placed on the browser of the Internet user's computer, enables collection and storage of data linked to browsing behavior. The cookies may be installed at the first- or third-party. The third party is to be banned since these cookies are increasingly rejected by the navigators, deleted by the Internet users or suppressed by third-party extensions such as anti-viruses. Implementing first-party cookies is essential to grant reliability to data collection.

► Rule no. 3: Respect the consumers and their e-privacy choices

The transposition of the "Telecoms Package" on 24 August reinforced IT regulations and freedom, imposing strict transparency between the Internet users and the web players. This law imposed the obligation to request the Internet user's consent and contributes to making Internet users aware of the risks of having their e-privacy violated. Beyond respect for the Law, establishing a transparent relationship with the Internet user and adapting to their choices in the area of the protection of one's private life is fundamental. Not using third-party cookies which are intrusive and not identifiable by the Internet user is another good practice. Respect for the Do Not Track function - proposed by navigators which enables the Internet user to express their desire not to be tracked - is also key to show the good faith of the e-retailer and its loyalty towards its visitors.

► Rule no. 4: Forget the transmission of parameters

The oldest tracking tools work by accepting parameters in the URLs. For each actual page of the site, supplementary parameters are added in order, for example, to identify the source of the visit. Besides its archaic nature, this practice gives rise to numerous technical risks having an impact on the quality

Author: Eulerian Technologies
www.eulerian.com

Emmanuel Brunet
CEO
emmanuel@eulerian.com
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/emmanuelbrunet>

of the data collected.

Redirect tracking via a tracking URL, a practice used by the main players of the search marketing and affiliation, is by far the most reliable solution. Each click will point to the company's servers in charge of the measure, and will then be redirected to the requested page. Tracking by redirection is entirely transparent for the Internet user.

This method has proved to be more reliable than parameter passing, which is entirely dependent on the presence of the parameter on the home page, on the accuracy of the page's JavaScript code, on the page loading time, on the presence of the collection tag, and so on... just as many parameters which may have an impact on the collection of information.

Redirection tracking is performed in advance of the click, and the Internet user will nevertheless be assigned to the acquisition channel, without the site necessarily being 100% operational. The visit will also be allowed enabling a monitoring of the possible discrepancies.

► **Rule no. 5: Do not limit to the tracking of visits on the site**

Data collection should not be limited to the sole visitors of the site. It is important to ascertain the relationship between the Internet user and the e-retailer in advance of the visit in order to correctly identify the consumer's marketing history.

Measuring the advertising exposure and the possibility of linking the Internet users' profile and the creations to which they have been exposed are essential for the sound analysis of its purchase cycle.

Likewise, measuring the opening of the mails, which are sent in the framework of a customer acquisition operation or of a CRM tool, is very useful to identify the combinations of marketing channels which generate the transactions. Be it for a simple post-impression attribution of the transaction to advertising exposure or for the identification of pairs or triplets of marketing channels integrating the post-view, the measurement of all the contact points between an Internet user and the marketing operations enables a complete map of the effectiveness of the e-marketing strategy.

► **Rule no. 6: Obligatory real time**

Reactivity is a key factor in the optimization of marketing operations, taking into account the permanence of an e-commerce site, open 24/7 and the constraints of significant results typical of this sector. It is essentially vital to react very quickly to any unforeseen circumstance.

Indeed, be it a sales day or during private sales, the financial result of an e-commerce site may be played in few hours. That means being able to make optimizations, both in terms of traffic creation operations and of merchandising.

If the monitoring of marketing operations is essential, automated optimization is everything all the same. The conversions of performance-based acquisition campaigns must be able to be deduplicated in real-time, in order to avoid any manual re-processing of sales attributions. Abandoners must be able to be retargeted in the minutes following their session, in order to transform a hot prospect into a customer. An alert system enabling identification of site dysfunctions must be implemented in order to correct them immediately.

► **Rule no. 7: Centralized data**

The database must be unique with a uniform collection in order to give the marketing teams a unique monitoring center. It is important not to multiply the solutions discussing together via the parameter passing, with the risk of altering the quality of the data and generating discrepancies or inconsistencies.

The stakes of data quality linked to site performances

- Ultra-performing decision-making tools
- Strong vision of results for in-depth optimizations
- Heavy penalties in the event of not accepting the legal regulations

“Redirect tracking via a tracking URL, a practice used by the main players of the search marketing and affiliation, is by far the most reliable solution.”